

Message Text

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S/S-O:JETHYDEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 179608

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FOR FORBES FOR UNDERSECRETARY NEWSOM

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM TEL AVIV DATED JULY 15, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO CAIRO, BONN, WHITE HOUSE IS REPEATED
TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 8957

EXDIS DIST AS NODIS

BONN FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, EG, IS, US

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN SADAT'S TACTICS TOWARD BEGIN

REF: CAIRO 17026

1. WE HAD REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSION ABOUT SADAT'S
CHANGING TACTICS TOWARD BEGIN FROM WATCHING HIS BEHAVIOR
OVER THE PAST TEN DAYS. WE HAD ALSO REGRETFULLY CON-
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CLUDED THAT WHATEVER VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE SAID TO
SADAT ON THIS SUBJECT, AND HE WAS URGED PRIVATELY BY
EVERY ISRAELI LEADER WITH WHOM HE TALKED TO RAISE IT
WITH SADAT, IT MUST HAVE HAD NO EFFECT.

2. I BELIEVE SADAT IS MAKING A MAJOR ERROR BY WRITING
OFF BEGIN IN FAVOR OF A DECIDEDLY OBVIOUS EFFORT TO

MANIPULATE ISRAELI INTERNAL POLITICS. LABOR PARTY
SPOKESMEN ARE UNDOUBTEDLY EASIER TO TALK TO; HOWEVER,
WERE THEY TODAY IN POWER--WITH BEGIN IN OPPOSITION--
THEY WOULD HAVE A NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TASK--NOT ONLY TO
MAKE PEACE IN A WAY THAT SADAT MIGHT ACCEPT, BUT MORE
IMPORTANT TO SELL THE CONCESSIONS WHICH WOULD BE
INVOLVED TO THE ISRAELI PUBLIC. AND AS FOR WEIZMAN,
HE HAS NO PROSPECT OF REPLACING BEGIN AS PRIME MINISTER
SO LONG AS BEGIN IS PHYSICALLY AND POLITICALLY ACTIVE.
THESE MAY BE UNAPPETIZING JUDGMENTS FOR SADAT, BUT THEY
ARE THE REALITY OF THE ISRAELI POLITICAL SCENE WITH WHICH
HE SHOULD BE DEALING. AND SO LONG AS THIS IS THE REALITY,
HEAVY HANDED EFFORTS TO PLAY OFF WEIZMAN AND PERES
AGAINST BEGIN AND DAYAN WILL ONLY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT
FOR HIM TO COAX THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT INTO HIS NET.
BEGIN AND DAYAN ARE NOT ONLY WILY POLITICIANS, EACH IN
HIS OWN WAY, BUT ALSO PROUD AND SENSITIVE MEN. FOR
SADAT'S NEW TACTIC TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS WOULD
REQUIRE THAT HE EMPLOY CONSUMMATE SUBTLETY. THE RECORD
THUS FAR SUGGESTS HE IS BETTER AT SHOCK TACTICS, WHERE
HE UNQUESTIONABLY EXCELLS. BEGIN MAY BRING HIMSELF DOWN
BY HIS OWN MISTAKES, BUT SADAT'S CURRENT APPROACH IS
LIKELY TO BACKFIRE. IN THE PROCESS, I FEAR THAT PROSPECTS
FOR REACHING PEACE AGREEMENTS WILL BE SET BACK RATHER
THAN ADVANCED.

LEWIS UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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